

108
Greatest Of All Times



Globally selected
Personalities

America will never be destroyed
from the outside. If we falter and
lose our freedoms, it will be
because we **destroyed ourselves**.

— Abraham Lincoln —

AZ QUOTES

12 Feb 1809 <::><::><::> 15 Apl 1865

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Compiled by:

Prof Dr S Ramalingam



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AD-13, 5th Street, Anna Nagar West, Chennai - 600 040

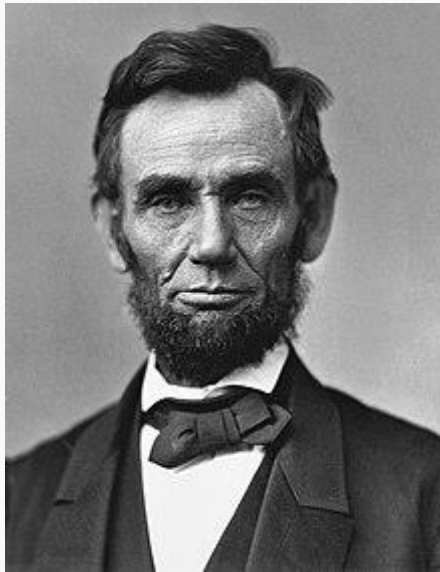
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12 Feb 1809



15 Apr 1865

Abraham Lincoln



Lincoln in 1863

16th [President of the United States](#)

In office

March 4, 1861 – April 15, 1865

[Vice President](#)

- [Hannibal Hamlin](#)
(1861–1865)
- Andrew Johnson
(Mar–Apr. 1865)

Preceded by [James Buchanan](#)

Succeeded by [Andrew Johnson](#)

Member of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#)
from [Illinois's 7th](#) district


In office

March 4, 1847 – March 3, 1849

Preceded by [John Henry](#)

Succeeded by [Thomas L. Harris](#)

Member of the
[Illinois House of Representatives](#)
from [Sangamon County](#)

In office	
December 1, 1834 – December 4, 1842	
Preceded by	Achilles Morris
Personal details	
Born	February 12, 1809 Sinking Spring Farm , Kentucky, U.S.
Died	April 15, 1865 (aged 56) Washington, D.C., U.S.
Manner of death	Assassination by gunshot
Resting place	Lincoln Tomb
Political party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whig (before 1856) • Republican (after 1856)
Other political affiliations	National Union (1864–1865)
Height	6 ft 4 in (193 cm)
Spouse	Mary Todd
	(m. 1842)
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert • Edward • Willie • Tad
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Lincoln • Nancy Hanks
Relatives	Lincoln family
Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politician • lawyer
Signature	

Assassination

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/abraham-lincoln-papers/articles-and-essays/assassination-of-president-abraham-lincoln/>

On the evening of April 14, 1865, while attending a special performance of the comedy, "Our American Cousin," President Abraham Lincoln was shot. Accompanying him at [Ford's Theatre](#) that night were his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, a twenty-eight year-old officer named Major Henry R. Rathbone, and Rathbone's fiancée, Clara Harris. After the play was in progress, a figure with a drawn [derringer pistol](#) stepped into the [presidential box](#), aimed, and [fired](#). The president slumped forward.

The assassin, [John Wilkes Booth](#), dropped the pistol and waved a [dagger](#). Rathbone lunged at him, and though slashed in the arm, forced the killer to the railing. Booth [leapt from the balcony](#) and caught the spur of his left boot on a flag draped over the rail, and broke a bone in his leg on landing. Though injured, he rushed out the back door, and disappeared into the night on horseback.

A doctor in the audience, Dr. Charles Leale, immediately went upstairs to the box. The bullet had entered through Lincoln's left ear and lodged behind his right eye. He was paralyzed and barely breathing. He was carried across Tenth Street, to a [boarding-house](#) opposite the theater, but the doctors' best efforts failed. Nine hours later, at 7:22 a.m. on April 15th, [Lincoln died](#).



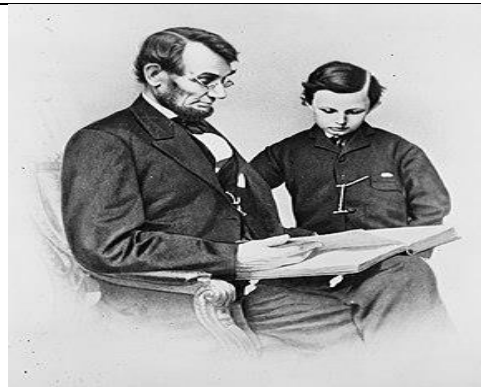
President Lincoln's funeral procession in New York City

At almost the same moment Booth fired the fatal shot, his accomplice, [Lewis Powell](#) (alias Lewis Paine, Lewis Payne), attacked Lincoln's secretary of state, [William Henry Seward](#), at his home on Lafayette Square. Seward lay in bed, recovering from a carriage accident. Powell entered the mansion, claiming to have a delivery of medicine from the secretary's doctor. Seward's son, Frederick, was brutally beaten while trying to keep Powell from his father's door. Powell slashed the secretary's throat twice, then fought his way past Seward's son Augustus, an attending hospital corps veteran, and a State Department messenger.

Powell escaped into the night, believing his deed complete. However, a metal surgical collar saved Seward from certain death. The secretary lived another seven years, during which he retained his seat with the Johnson administration, and purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.

There were at least four conspirators in addition to Booth involved in the mayhem. Booth was shot and captured while [hiding in a barn](#) near Bowling Green, Virginia, and died later the same day, April 26, 1865. Four co-conspirators, [Powell](#), [George Atzerodt](#), [David Herold](#), and Mary Surratt, were [hanged at the gallows](#) of the [Old Penitentiary](#), on the site of present-day Fort McNair, on July 7, 1865.

(☺)@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@(☺)



1864 photo of President Lincoln with youngest son, Tad



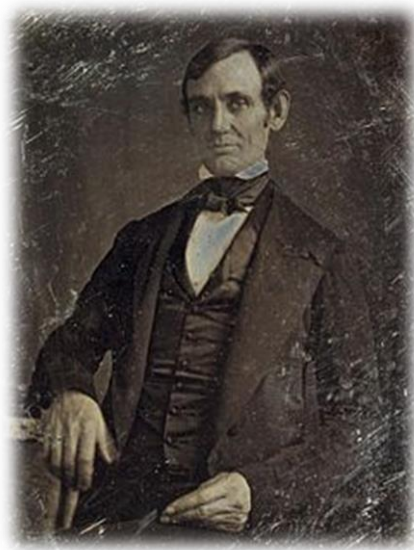
Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln, in 1861



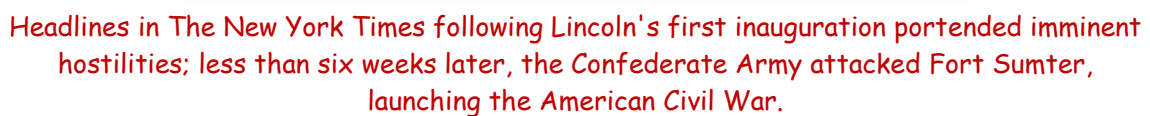
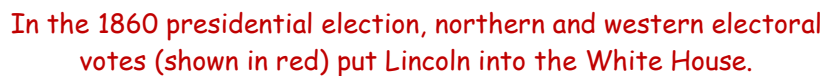
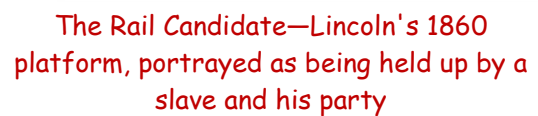
The farm site where Lincoln grew up in Spencer County, Indiana

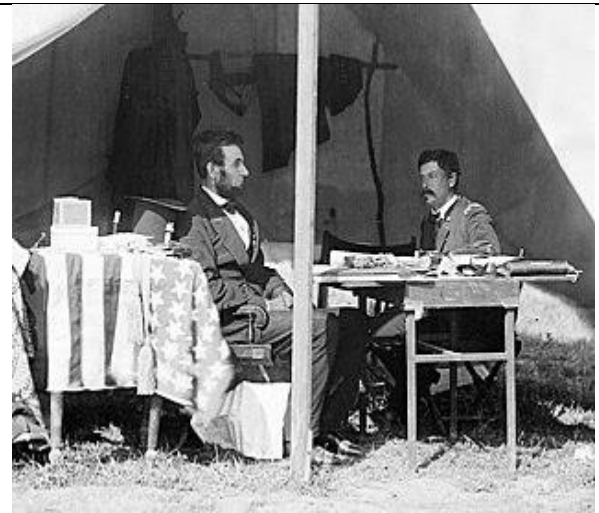
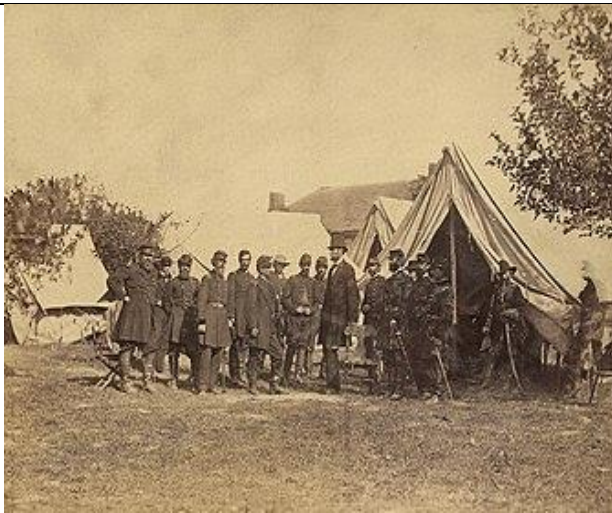


Lincoln's home in Springfield, Illinois



Lincoln in his late 30s as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives around 1846





Lincoln among a group of soldiers in a military camp

Photograph of Lincoln and McClellan sitting at a table in a field tent

The image on the left shows Lincoln with officers after the Battle of Antietam. Notable figures (from left) are 1. Col. Delos Sackett; 4. Gen. George W. Morell; 5. Alexander S. Webb, Chief of Staff, V Corps; 6. McClellan; 8. Jonathan Letterman; 10. Lincoln; 11. Henry J. Hunt; 12. Fitz John Porter; 15. Andrew A. Humphreys; 16. Capt. George Armstrong Custer.

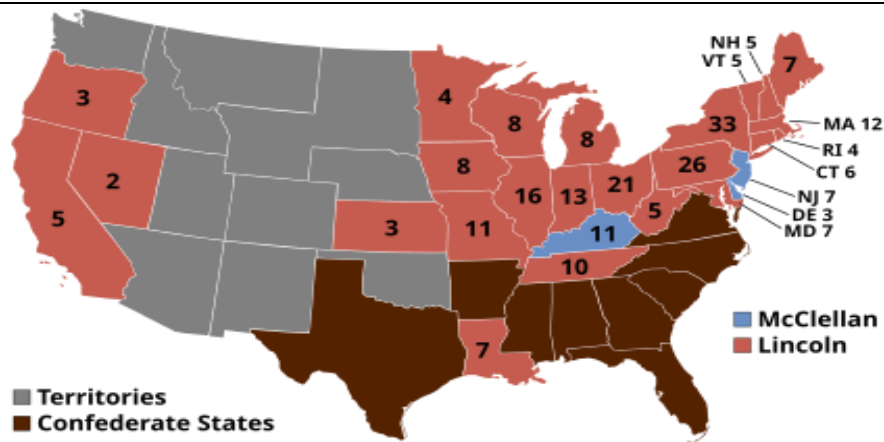
The image on the right shows Lincoln and McClellan on October 3, 1862.



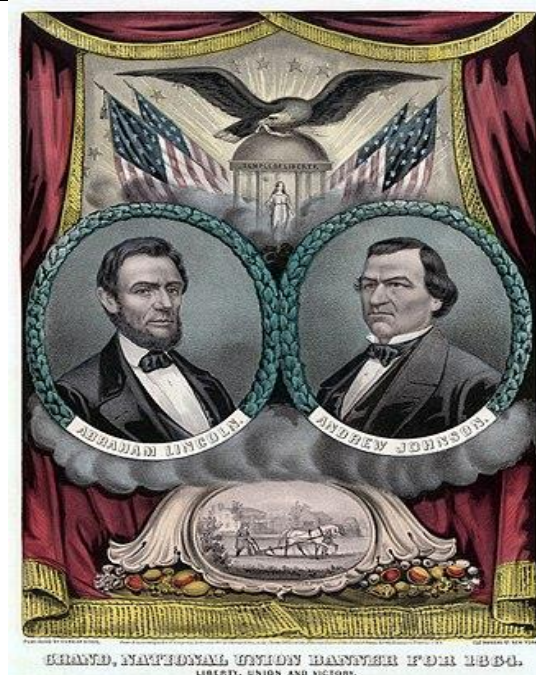
Lincoln (absent his usual top hat and highlighted in red) at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863. Roughly three hours later, he delivered the Gettysburg Address, one of the best-known speeches in American history.



The Peacemakers, an 1868 painting by George P.A. Healy of events aboard the River Queen in March 1865



An electoral landslide for Lincoln (in red) in the 1864 election; southern states (brown) and territories (gray) not in play



A poster of the 1864 election campaign with Andrew Johnson as the candidate for vice president.



A political cartoon of Vice President Andrew Johnson (a former tailor) and Lincoln, 1865, entitled The 'Rail Splitter' At Work Repairing the Union. The caption reads (Johnson): "Take it quietly Uncle Abe and I will draw it closer than ever." (Lincoln): "A few more stitches Andy and the good old Union will be mended."

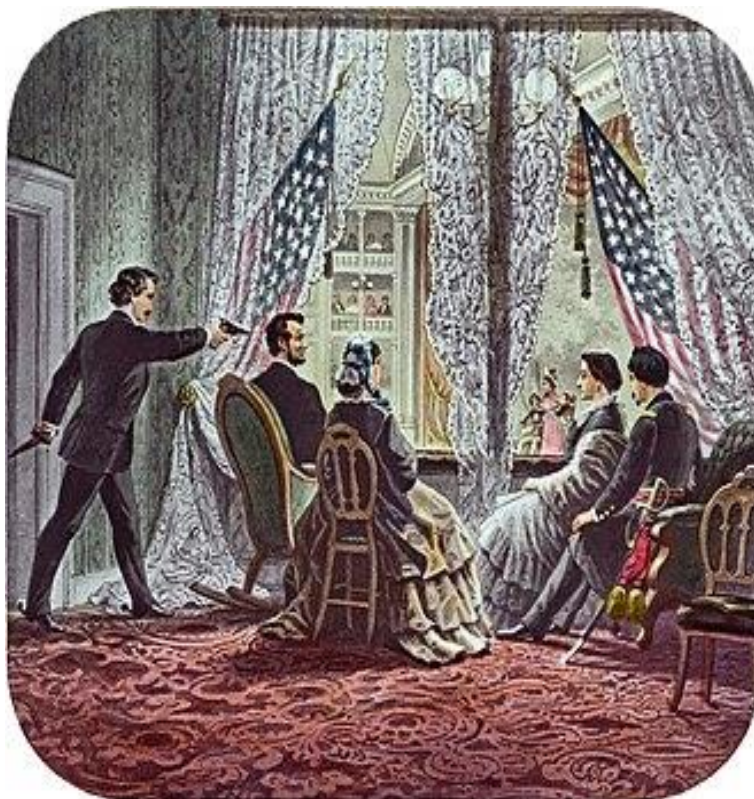
The Lincoln cabinet		
Office	Name	Term
President	Abraham Lincoln	1861–1865
Vice President	Hannibal Hamlin	1861–1865
	Andrew Johnson	1865
Secretary of State	William H. Seward	1861–1865
Secretary of the Treasury	Salmon P. Chase	1861–1864
	William P. Fessenden	1864–1865
	Hugh McCulloch	1865
Secretary of War	Simon Cameron	1861–1862
	Edwin M. Stanton	1862–1865
Attorney General	Edward Bates	1861–1864
	James Speed	1864–1865
Postmaster General	Montgomery Blair	1861–1864
	William Dennison Jr.	1864–1865
Secretary of the Navy	Gideon Welles	1861–1865
Secretary of the Interior	Caleb Blood Smith	1861–1862
	John Palmer Usher	1863–1865

Supreme Court appointments

Supreme Court Justices

Justice	Nominated	Appointed
Noah Haynes Swayne	January 21, 1862	January 24, 1862
Samuel Freeman Miller	July 16, 1862	July 16, 1862
David Davis	December 1, 1862	December 8, 1862
Stephen Johnson Field	March 6, 1863	March 10, 1863
Salmon Portland Chase (Chief Justice)	December 6, 1864	December 6, 1864

Assassination



Shown in the presidential booth of Ford's Theatre, from left to right, are assassin John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln, Mary Todd Lincoln, Clara Harris, and Henry Rathbone.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THE 16TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/abraham-lincoln/>

Abraham Lincoln became the United States' 16th President in 1861, issuing the Emancipation Proclamation that declared forever free those slaves within the Confederacy in 1863.

Lincoln warned the South in his Inaugural Address: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you.... You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it."

Lincoln thought secession illegal, and was willing to use force to defend Federal law and the Union. When Confederate batteries fired on Fort Sumter and forced its surrender, he called on the states for 75,000 volunteers. Four more slave states joined the Confederacy but four remained within the Union. The Civil War had begun.

The son of a Kentucky frontiersman, Lincoln had to struggle for a living and for learning. Five months before receiving his party's nomination for President, he sketched his life:

"I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families-second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks.... My father ... removed from Kentucky to ... Indiana, in my eighth year.... It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up.... Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher ... but that was all."

Lincoln made extraordinary efforts to attain knowledge while working on a farm, splitting rails for fences, and keeping store at New Salem, Illinois. He was a captain

in the Black Hawk War, spent eight years in the Illinois legislature, and rode the circuit of courts for many years. His law partner said of him, "His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest."

He married Mary Todd, and they had four boys, only one of whom lived to maturity. In 1858 Lincoln ran against Stephen A. Douglas for Senator. He lost the election, but in debating with Douglas he gained a national reputation that won him the Republican nomination for President in 1860.

As President, he built the Republican Party into a strong national organization. Further, he rallied most of the northern Democrats to the Union cause. On January 1, 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation that declared forever free those slaves within the Confederacy.

Lincoln never let the world forget that the Civil War involved an even larger issue. This he stated most movingly in dedicating the military cemetery at Gettysburg: "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain-that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Lincoln won re-election in 1864, as Union military triumphs heralded an end to the war. In his planning for peace, the President was flexible and generous, encouraging Southerners to lay down their arms and join speedily in reunion.

The spirit that guided him was clearly that of his Second Inaugural Address, now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C.: "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds...."

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who somehow thought he was helping the South. The opposite was the result, for with Lincoln's death, the possibility of peace with magnanimity died.





Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/abraham-lincoln-papers/about-this-collection/>

About this Collection

The papers of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), lawyer, representative from Illinois, and sixteenth president of the United States, contain approximately 40,550 documents dating from 1774 to 1948, although most of the collection spans from the 1850s through Lincoln's presidency (1861-1865). Roughly half of the collection, more than 20,000 documents, comprising 62,000 images, as well as transcriptions of approximately 10,000 documents, is online. Included on this website in their entirety are Series 1-3 of the Lincoln Papers and the original materials in Series 4. Excluded from this online presentation is a sizeable portion of Series 4, which consists of printed material and reproductions of government and military documents made from originals in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Treasures in the collection include Lincoln's first and second inaugural addresses, his preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, the two earliest known copies of the Gettysburg Address (the Nicolay and Hay copies), his August 23, 1864, memorandum expressing his expectation of being defeated for re-election in the upcoming presidential contest, and a condolence letter written to Mary Todd Lincoln by Queen Victoria following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865. The Lincoln Papers are characterized by a large number of correspondents, including friends and associates from Lincoln's Springfield days, well-known political figures and reformers, and local people and organizations writing to their president.

Notable correspondents include Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, Edward Bates, Montgomery Blair, Salmon P. Chase, Schuyler Colfax, David Davis, Ulysses S. Grant, John Hay, Andrew Johnson, Reverdy Johnson, Mary Todd Lincoln, George Brinton McClellan, George Gordon Meade, Edwin D. Morgan, John G. Nicolay, William S. Rosecrans, William Henry Seward, Horatio Seymour, Caleb B. Smith, Edwin McMasters Stanton, Charles Sumner, Lyman Trumbull, E. B. Washburne, and Gideon Welles.

The [Index to the Abraham Lincoln Papers](#), created by the Manuscript Division in 1960 after the bulk of the collection was microfilmed, provides a full list of the correspondents and notes the series number, dates, and mounting-sheet numbers for items in Series 1-3 of the Abraham Lincoln Papers. This information, in addition to the keyword search capability in the online presentation, is helpful in finding individual letters or documents in the online version. Additional letters received by the Library after 1960 are not listed in this index.

A current finding aid ([PDF](#) and [HTML](#)) to the Abraham Lincoln Papers is also available online.

Brief History of the Lincoln Papers

Abraham Lincoln's papers were acquired by gifts, transfers, deposits, purchases, and reproductions during the years 1901-2013. The Lincoln Papers came to the Library of Congress from Lincoln's oldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln (1843-1926), who arranged for their organization and care shortly after his father was assassinated on April 14, 1865. At that time, Robert Todd Lincoln had the Lincoln Papers removed to Illinois, where they were first organized under the direction of Judge David Davis of Bloomington, Illinois, Abraham Lincoln's longtime associate. Later, Lincoln's presidential secretaries, John G. Nicolay and John Hay, assisted in the project. In 1874, most of the Lincoln Papers returned to Washington, D.C., and Nicolay and Hay used them in the research and writing of their ten-volume biography, *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (New York, 1890). Robert Todd Lincoln deposited the Lincoln Papers with the Library of Congress in 1919, and deeded them to the Library on January 23, 1923. The deed stipulated that the Lincoln Papers remain sealed until twenty-one years after Robert Todd Lincoln's death. On July 26, 1947, the Lincoln Papers were officially opened to the public.

The most complete account of the early history of the Abraham Lincoln Papers appears in volume 1 of David C. Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers* (Garden City, N.Y., 1948), 3-136. An article by the same author which appeared in the December 1947 issue of the [Abraham Lincoln Quarterly External](#) contains the substance of the story. An additional history of the provenance of the collection was prepared for the [Index to the Abraham Lincoln Papers](#), pp. v-vi, and subsequently reproduced in the finding aid ([PDF](#) and [HTML](#)). A version appears on this website as the essay [Provenance of the Abraham Lincoln Papers](#).

Some Lincoln documents which had been retained by Nicolay were restored to the Lincoln Papers and were arranged as Series 2 to assure their identification. Other miscellaneous acquisitions are found in Series 3 and 4.

Scanned images from the Abraham Lincoln Papers first became available online in 2001 as the American Memory website *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*. Transcriptions prepared for roughly half of the documents by the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College were added in 2002. The present iteration of the online Abraham Lincoln Papers is an updated version of the American Memory site, with additional features, original materials not included in the previous presentation, and the replacement of images scanned from the microfilm edition with full-color images scanned from the original documents.

Description of Series

The Abraham Lincoln Papers are arranged in five series. All of the documents contained in Series 1-3 are reproduced online, as are the original materials contained in Series 4. Although collection items in the online presentation are described at the item level, they may be accessed in groups at the Series level. Individual document headings and available transcriptions can be searched by keyword.

Series 1, General Correspondence and Related Documents, 1833-1916

Consists of manuscripts inherited by Robert Todd Lincoln, which have been designated "The Robert Todd Lincoln Collection of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln." Series 1 includes the so-called "Carpet Bag Documents," which were stored in a carpet bag that suffered water damage. A [list of the "Carpet Bag Documents"](#) created in 1874 by Lincoln's secretary John G. Nicolay is available in this series.

Series 2, Additional Correspondence, 1858-1865

Comprised of correspondence retained by Lincoln's secretary John G. Nicolay, which remained with the Nicolay Papers (received by the Library in 1947) until August 1959, when the letters were removed and reincorporated with the Lincoln Papers.

Series 3, Miscellaneous, 1837-1897

Includes single or small numbers of manuscripts which have been acquired by the Library of Congress from a variety of sources.

Series 4, Addenda, 1774-1948

The addenda to the Abraham Lincoln Papers consists mostly of reproductions of government and military documents made from originals in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration, 1774-1887. Reproductions of documents held by the National Archives are not represented on this online collection, nor are published materials. Original items contained in Series 4 are included in this online collection and include letters written by Abraham Lincoln, an autobiographical sketch written in

1859 at the request of Jesse W. Fell, mourning cards, political ephemera, a pen purportedly used by Abraham Lincoln, and papers omitted as not being integral to the collection when it was microfilmed and indexed in 1960. Please consult the collection finding aid ([PDF](#) and [HTML](#)) for more detailed information about the contents of Series 4.

Oversize, 1776-1865

Includes original correspondence and facsimile reproductions, certificates, pardons, a petition, a poem, pen, and printed matter. Images of all oversize materials in Series 1-3 and original materials in Series 4 are included in the online presentation and appear with the series from which they were withdrawn when rehoused as part of an oversize series. Oversize facsimiles and reproductions were not included in the online presentation.

Transcriptions Included on this Website

Transcriptions are included for about 10,000 items (about half of the online collection). The Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois performed the editorial work, which included selecting the documents to be transcribed. Their choices were based on either a document's historical importance or as representative of the president's unsolicited incoming mail. Annotated transcriptions were provided for all of the documents in Lincoln's own hand and for secretarial copies of Lincoln documents located in Series 1-3 of the Lincoln Papers. Many of the other transcriptions were also annotated to aid users in identifying the people involved and in better understanding the content and historical contexts. Annotations for Lincoln's autograph documents usually include a headnote providing historical and documentary context, as well as annotations on the content of the document. Annotations for incoming correspondence typically identify persons and organizations writing to Lincoln or referred to in the documents, explain terms and events, and provide brief historical context. Together, these fully searchable transcriptions and annotations dramatically extend access to the Abraham Lincoln Papers and enhance their teaching and research value. For more information on transcriptions in the Abraham Lincoln Papers see the essay [Editors' Preface to the Transcriptions](#).



Civil War

{<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/abraham-lincoln>}

Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States, was born near Hodgenville, Kentucky on February 12, 1809. His family moved to Indiana when he was seven and he grew up on the edge of the frontier. He had very little formal education, but read voraciously when not working on his father's farm. A childhood friend later recalled Lincoln's "manic" intellect, and the sight of him red-eyed and tousle-haired as he pored over books late into the night. In 1828, at the age of nineteen, he accompanied a produce-laden flatboat down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, Louisiana—his first visit to a large city--and then walked back home. Two years later, trying to avoid health and finance troubles, Lincoln's father moved the family moved to Illinois.

After moving away from home, Lincoln co-owned a general store for several years before selling his stake and enlisting as a militia captain defending Illinois in the Black Hawk War of 1832. Black Hawk, a Sauk chief, believed he had been swindled by a recent land deal and sought to resettle his old holdings. Lincoln did not see direct combat during the short conflict, but the sight of corpse-strewn battlefields at Stillman's Run and Kellogg's Grove deeply affected him. As a captain, he developed a reputation for pragmatism and integrity. Once, faced with a rail fence during practice maneuvers and forgetting the parade-ground instructions to direct his men over it, he simply ordered them to fall out and reassemble on the other side a minute later. Another time, he stopped his men before they executed a wandering Native American as a spy. Stepping in front of their raised muskets, Lincoln is said to have challenged his men to combat for the terrified native's life. His men stood down.

After the war, he studied law and campaigned for a seat on the Illinois State Legislature. Although not elected in his first attempt, Lincoln persevered and won the position in 1834, serving as a Whig.

Abraham Lincoln met Mary Todd in Springfield, Illinois where he was practicing as a lawyer. They were married in 1842 over her family's objections and had four sons. Only one lived to adulthood. The deep melancholy that pervaded the Lincoln family, with occasional detours into outright madness, is in some ways sourced in their close relationship with death.

Lincoln, a self-described "prairie lawyer," focused on his all-embracing law practice in the early 1850s after one term in Congress from 1847 to 1849. He joined the new Republican party—and the ongoing argument over sectionalism—in 1856. A series of heated debates in 1858 with Stephen A. Douglas, the sponsor of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, over slavery and its place in the United States forged Lincoln into a prominent figure in national politics. Lincoln's anti-slavery platform made him extremely unpopular with Southerners and his nomination for President in 1860 enraged them.

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln won the presidential election without the support of a single Southern state. Talk of secession, bandied about since the 1830s, took on a serious new tone. The Civil War was not entirely caused by Lincoln's election, but the election was one of the primary reasons the war broke out the following year.

Lincoln's decision to fight rather than to let the Southern states secede was not based on his feelings towards slavery. Rather, he felt it was his sacred duty as President of the United States to preserve the Union at all costs. His first inaugural address was an appeal to the rebellious states, seven of which had already seceded, to rejoin the nation. His first draft of the speech ended with an ominous message: "Shall it be peace, or the sword?"

The Civil War began with the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861. Fort Sumter, situated in the Charleston Harbour, was a Union outpost in the newly seceded Confederate territory. Lincoln, learning that the Fort was running low on food, sent supplies to reinforce the soldiers there. The Southern navy repulsed the supply convoy. After this repulse, the Southern navy fired the first shot of the war at Fort Sumter and the Federal defenders surrendered after a 34-hour long battle.

Throughout the war, Lincoln struggled to find capable generals for his armies. As commander-in-chief, he legally held the highest rank in the United States armed forces, and he diligently exercised his authority through strategic planning, weapons testing, and the promotion and demotion of officers. McDowell, Fremont, McClellan, Pope, McClellan again, Buell, Burnside, Rosecrans--all of these men and more withered under Lincoln's watchful eye as they failed to bring him success on the battlefield.

He did not issue his famous Emancipation Proclamation until January 1, 1863 after the Union victory at the Battle of Antietam. The Emancipation Proclamation, which was legally based on the President's right to seize the property of those in rebellion against the State, only freed slaves in Southern states where Lincoln's forces had no control. Nevertheless, it changed the tenor of the war, making it, from the Northern point of view, a fight both to preserve the Union and to end slavery.

In 1864, Lincoln ran again for President. After years of war, he feared he would not win. Only in the final months of the campaign did the exertions of Ulysses S. Grant, the quiet general now in command of all of the Union armies, begin to bear fruit. A string of heartening victories buoyed Lincoln's ticket and contributed significantly to his re-election. In his second inauguration speech, March 4, 1865, he set the tone he intended to take when the war finally ended. His one goal, he said, was "lasting peace among ourselves." He called for "malice towards none" and "charity for all." The war ended only a month later.

The Lincoln administration did more than just manage the Civil War, although its reverberations could still be felt in a number of policies. The Revenue Act of 1862 established the United States' first income tax, largely to pay the costs of total war. The Morrill Act of 1862 established the basis of the state university system in this country, while the Homestead Act, also passed in 1862, encouraged settlement of the West by offering 160 acres of free land to settlers. Lincoln also created the Department of Agriculture and formally instituted the Thanksgiving holiday. Internationally, he navigated the "Trent Affair," a diplomatic crisis regarding the seizure of a British ship carrying Confederate envoys, in such a way as to quell

the saber-rattling overtures coming from Britain as well as the United States. In another spill-over from the war, Lincoln restricted the civil liberties of due process and freedom of the press.

On April 14, 1865, while attending a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C., Abraham Lincoln was shot by Confederate sympathizer, John Wilkes Booth. The assassination was part of a larger plot to eliminate the Northern government that also left Secretary of State William Seward grievously injured. Lincoln died the following day, and with him the hope of reconstructing the nation without bitterness.

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Ford's Theatre

<https://fords.org/>



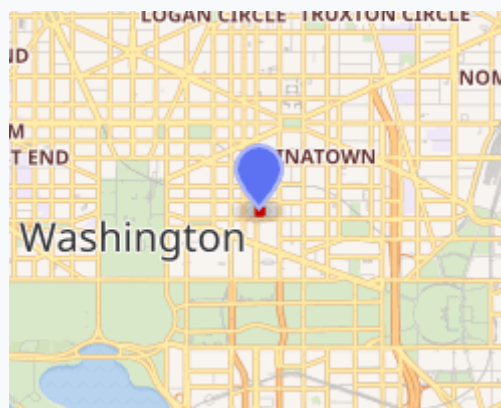
Our Mission:

Ford's Theatre explores the legacy of President Abraham Lincoln and celebrates the American experience through theatre and education.

Explore the Campus

Visit Ford's Theatre and step back in time. While at our historic site, you will learn about the events of April 14, 1865, and the lasting impact of Lincoln's assassination on our nation.

Ford's Theatre



[Wikimedia](#) | © [OpenStreetMap](#)

Address	511 10th St, N.W. Washington, D.C. United States
Owner	National Park Service
Operator	Ford's Theatre Society
Type	Regional theater
Capacity	665

Construction

Opened	August 1863; 161 years ago
Reopened	1968, 2009

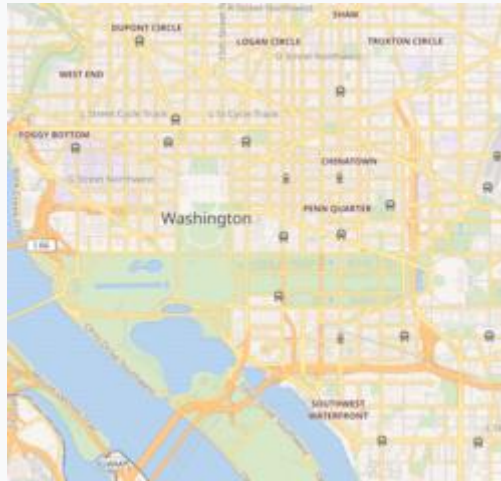
Website

www.fords.org

Ford's Theatre National Historic Site

[U.S. National Register of Historic Places](#)

[U.S. National Historic Site](#)



Show map of Central Washington, D.C.

Show map of the District of Columbia

Show map of the United States

Show all

Coordinates

 [38°53'48"N 77°1'33"W](#)

Area

0.29 acres (0.12 ha) (theater alone) less than one acre (entire NHS)

Built

1863

Architectural style

Late Victorian

Visitation

856,079 (2005)

Website

[Ford's Theatre National Historic Site](#)

NRHP reference No. [66000034^{\[1\]}](#)

Added to NRHP

October 15, 1966

Kindly visit these Web Links:

- [Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site](#)
- [Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum](#)
- [Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial](#)
- [Lincoln Home National Historic Site](#)
- [Lincoln Memorial](#)
- [Lincoln Memorial University](#)
- [Lincoln Tomb](#)
- [Mount Rushmore](#)
- [National Register of Historic Places listings in central Washington, D.C.](#)
- [Theater in Washington, D.C.](#)
- [President Lincoln's Cottage](#)
- [Presidential memorials in the United States](#)

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The Museum

Explore exhibits on Lincoln's presidency, Civil War milestones and the assassination conspiracy led by John Wilkes Booth.



Theatre



Go inside the historic theatre and learn about the night of the assassination.

Petersen House



Download a virtual reality experience with first-person accounts from those who witnessed Lincoln's final hours.

Aftermath Exhibit



Virtually explore some of the artifacts related to Lincoln's funeral train and the trial of the conspirators.

Videos

[A] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAIXdmOVWL4> [20:30 Min.]

FORD'S THEATRE ..site of Lincoln's assassination

Trip up to Washington DC to visit Ford's Theatre and the Peterson House. Where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth.

[B] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFICRO4F-Gw> [8:27 Min.]

See Where Abraham Lincoln was Assassinated - Ford's Theater

Ford's Theater was built in 1863 and served as one of the most prominent theaters in Washington DC at the time. The theater is most known as the notorious site of Abraham Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1865 by political extremist John Wilkes Booth and other conspirators. The building still serves as an active theater and you can see several different types of shows in the actual space of the assassination.

(☺)@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@@(☺)

Quotable QUOTES

"Lincoln's speech is understandable by people of all walks of life, by immigrants, by young people. Lincoln had no pretensions whatsoever. He allowed what he believed to be convincing on the evidence."

<<< Lewis Lehrman

Ambition and Opportunity

"I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has."

- Speech to One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment, August 22, 1864

"Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say for one that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition, is yet to be developed."

- Announcement for office , March 9, 1832

"Towering genius disdains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored."

- Lyceum Address, January 27, 1838

"Now, as to the young men. You must not wait to be brought forward by the older men. For instance, do you suppose that I should have ever got into notice if I had waited to be hunted up and pushed forward by older men?"

- Letter to William H. Herndon, July 22, 1848

"Adhere to your purpose and you will soon feel as well as you ever did. On the contrary, if you falter, and give up, you will lose the power of keeping any resolution, and will regret it all your life."

- Letter to Quintin Campbell, June 28, 1862

"I say 'try'; if we never try, we shall never succeed."

- Letter to George B. McClellan, October 13, 1862

"You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm."

- Letter to Joseph Hooker, January 26, 1863

Civil War and Secession

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the

Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect, and defend it'."

- Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely, they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

- Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

"This is essentially a People's contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men — to lift artificial weights from all shoulders — to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all — to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life."

- Message to Congress, July 4, 1861

"And having thus chosen our course, without guile, and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts."

- Special Message to Congress, July 4, 1861

"The struggle of today, is not altogether for today — it is for a vast future also."

- Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861

"I expect to maintain this contest until successful, or till I die, or am conquered, or my term expires, or Congress or the country forsakes me."
Letter to William H. Seward, June 28, 1862

"Broken eggs cannot be mended; but Louisiana has nothing to do now but take her place in the Union as it was, barring the already broken eggs."

- Letter to August Belmont, July 31, 1862

"The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise — with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

- Message to Congress, December 1, 1862

"In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and eternity."

- Message to Congress, December 1, 1862

"The proportions of this rebellion were not for a long time understood. I saw that it involved the greatest difficulties, and would call forth all the powers of the whole country."

- Reply to Members of the Presbyterian General Assembly, June 2, 1863

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure."

- Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

"Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away."

- Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

"The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party — and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose."

- Meditation on the Divine Will, circa September 2, 1862

"While we must, by all available means, prevent the overthrow of the government, we should avoid planting and cultivating too many thorns in the bosom of society."

- Letter to Edwin M. Stanton, March 18, 1864

"In this great struggle, this form of Government and every form of human right is endangered if our enemies succeed. There is more involved in this contest than is realized by every one."

- Speech to the 164th Ohio Regiment, August 18, 1864

"There is more involved in this contest than is realized by every one. There is involved in this struggle the question whether your children and my children shall enjoy the privileges we have enjoyed."

- Speech to the 164th Ohio Regiment, August 18, 1864

"Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."

- Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

Constitution

"Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained, for it is the only safeguard of our liberties. And not to Democrats alone do I make this appeal, but to all who love these great and true principles."

- Speech at Kalamazoo, Michigan, August 27, 1856

"Let us then turn this government back into the channel in which the framers of the Constitution originally placed it."

- Speech at Chicago, July 10, 1858

"I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be most happy indeed if I shall be an humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle."

- Speech to the New Jersey Senate, February 21, 1861

"I hold, that in contemplation of universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual."

- First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

"My purpose is to be, in my action, just and constitutional; and yet practical, in performing the important duty, with which I am charged, of maintaining the unity, and the free principles of our common country."

- Letter to Horatio Seymour, August 7, 1863

"I freely acknowledge myself the servant of the people, according to the bond of service — the United States Constitution; and that, as such, I am responsible to them."

- Letter to James Conkling, August 26, 1863

Criticism

"If I were to try to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how — the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what's said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

- Conversation with Francis B. Carpenter

Declaration of Independence

"Of our political revolution of '76, we all are justly proud. It has given us a degree of political freedom, far exceeding that of any other nation of the earth. In it the world has found a solution of the long mooted problem, as to the capability of man to govern

himself. In it was the germ which has vegetated, and still is to grow and expand into the universal liberty of mankind."

- Temperance Address at Springfield , February 22, 1842

"I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."

- Speech at Philadelphia, February 22, 1861

Democracy

"Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others."

- Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, January 27, 1838

"Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty."

- Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, January 27, 1838

"At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant, to step the Ocean, and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years. At what point, then, is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

- Address Before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, January 27, 1838

"Determine that the thing can and shall be done, and then we shall find the way."

- Speech in the House of Representatives, June 20, 1848

"In leaving the people's business in their own hands, we cannot be wrong."

- Speech in the House of Representatives, July 27, 1848

"The legitimate object of government is 'to do for the people what needs to be done, but which they cannot, by individual effort, do at all, or do so well, for themselves'."

- Fragment on Government, circa July 1, 1854

"Most governments have been based, practically, on the denial of equal rights of men...ours began, by affirming those rights. They said, some men are too ignorant, and vicious, to share in government. Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant, and vicious, to share in government. Possibly so, said we; and, by your system, you would always keep them ignorant, and vicious. We proposed

to give all a chance; and we expected the weak to grow stronger, the ignorant wiser; and all better, and happier together.”

- Fragment on slavery, circa July 1854

“According to our ancient faith, the just powers of governments are derived from the consent of the governed.”

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

“When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government – that is despotism.”

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

“If there is anything which it is the duty of the whole people to never entrust to any hands but their own, that thing is the preservation and perpetuity of their own liberties and institutions.”

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

“No man is good enough to govern another man without that other’s consent. I say this is the leading principle – the sheet anchor of American republicanism.”

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

“As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.”

- Fragment on Democracy, August 1, 1858

“Understanding the spirit of our institutions to aim at the elevation of men, I am opposed to whatever tends to degrade them.”

- Letter to Theodore Canisius, May 17, 1859

“The people – the people – are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts – not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert it.”

- Speech in Kansas, December 1859

“I do not mean to say that this government is charged with the duty of redressing or preventing all the wrongs in the world; but I do think that it is charged with the duty of preventing and redressing all wrongs which are wrongs to itself.”

- Speech at Cincinnati, September 17, 1859

“Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? IS there any better ore qual hope in the world?”

- First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

"The people will save their government, if the government itself will do its part only indifferently well."

- Special Message to Congress, July 4, 1861

"It is as much the duty of government to render prompt justice against itself, in favor of citizens, as it is to administer the same between private individuals."

- Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861

"The people's will, constitutionally expressed, is the ultimate law for all."

- Response to Serenade, October 19, 1864

"It is said that we have the best government the world ever knew, and I am glad to meet you, the supporters of that government."

- Speech to the 164th Ohio Regiment, October 24, 1864

"It has long been a grave question whether any government, not too strong for the liberties of its people, can be strong enough to maintain its own existence, in great emergencies."

- Response to a Serenade, November 10, 1864

Determination and Discipline

"Happy day, when, all appetites controlled, all poisons subdued, all matter subjected, mind all conquering mind, shall live and move the monarch of the world."

- Temperance Address, February 22, 1852

I know not how to aid you, save in the assurance of one of mature age, and much severe experience, that you cannot fail, if you resolutely determine, that you will not."

- Letter to George Latham, July 22, 1860

"Adhere to your purpose and you will soon feel as well as you ever did. On the contrary, if you falter, and give up, you will lose the power of keeping any resolution, and will regret it all your life."

- Letter to Quintin Campbell, June 28, 1862

"I am rather inclined to silence, and whether that be wise or not, it is at least more unusual nowadays to find a man who can hold his tongue than to find one who cannot."

- Speech at Pittsburgh, February 14, 1861

"And now, beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy, and sleepless vigilance, go forward, and give us victories."

- Letter to Joseph Hooker, January 26, 1863

Education and Self-Development

"All creation is a mine, and every man a miner."

- Lecture on Discoveries, Inventions and Improvements, February 22, 1859

"A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others. It is the key, or one of the keys, to the already solved problems. And not only so. It gives a relish, and facility, for successfully pursuing the [yet] unsolved ones."

- Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee, September 30, 1859

"Every blade of grass is a study; and to produce two, where was but one, is both a profit and pleasure."

- Address before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee, September 30, 1859

Equality

"I believe the declaration that 'all men are created equal' is the great fundamental principle upon which our free institutions rest."

- Letter to James N. Brown, October 18, 1858

"I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man. "

- Debate at Ottawa, Illinois, August 21, 1858

"I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in anyway the social and political equality of the white and black races – that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. I say upon this occasion I do not perceive that because the white man is to have the superior position the negro should be denied everything."

- Debate at Charleston, Illinois, September 18, 1858

"We have, as all will agree, a free Government, where every man has a right to be equal with every other man. In this great struggle, this form of Government and every form of human right is endangered if our enemies succeed."

- Speech to the One Hundred Sixty-fourth Ohio Regiment, August 22, 1864

Ethics and Honesty

"Holding it a sound maxim that it is better only sometimes to be right than at all times to be wrong, so soon as I discover my opinions to be erroneous, I shall be ready to renounce them."

- Address to the People of Sangamon County, March 9, 1832

"I made a point of honor and conscience in all things to stick to my word, especially if others had been induced to act upon it."

- Letter to Eliza Browning, April 1, 1838

"In very truth he was, the noblest work of God – an honest man."

- Eulogy for Benjamin Ferguson, February 8, 1842

"I believe it is an established maxim in morals that he who makes an assertion without knowing whether it is true or false, is guilty of falsehood; and the accidental truth of the assertion, does not justify or excuse him."

- Letter to Allen N. Ford, August 11, 1846

"Let no young man choosing the law for a calling for a moment yield to the popular belief — resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer."
Notes for a Law Lecture, circa July 1, 1850

"Stand with anybody that stands RIGHT. Stand with him while he is right and PART with him when he goes wrong."

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

"I planted myself upon the truth, and the truth only, so, as far I knew it, or could be brought to know it."

- Speech at Springfield, July 17, 1858

That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles — right and wrong — throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings."

- Debate at Alton, October 15, 1858

"Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the Government nor of dungeons to ourselves. LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT."

- Cooper Union Address, February 27, 1860

"I have said nothing but I am willing to live by, and, in the pleasure of Almighty God, die by."

- Speech at Philadelphia, February 22, 1861

"Truth is generally the best vindication against slander."

- September 1864

"Bad promises are better broken than kept."

- Last public speech, April 11, 1865

God and Prayer

"That I am not a member of any Christian Church, is true; but I have never denied the truth of the Scriptures; and I have never spoken with intentional disrespect of religion in general, or any denomination of Christians in particular."

- Handbill Replying to Charges of Infidelity, July 31, 1846

"To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

- Farewell Address, February 11, 1861

"Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him, who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust, in the best way, all our present difficulty."

- First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong."

- Meditation on the Divine Will, September 1862

"Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in His own good time, will give us the rightful result."

- Letter to John C. Conkling, August 26, 1863

"Nevertheless, amid the greatest difficulties of my Administration, when I could not see any other resort, I would place my whole reliance on God, knowing that all would go well, and that He would decide for the right."

- Remarks to the Baltimore Presbyterian Synod, October 24, 1863

"I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day."

- Conversation with Noah Brooks

"...I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

- Conversation with Francis B. Carpenter

"If God now wills the removal of a great wrong, and wills also that we of the North as well as you of the South, shall pay fairly for our complicity in that wrong, impartial history will find therein new cause to attest and revere the justice and goodness of God."

- Letter to Albert Hodges, April 4, 1864

"In regard to this Great Book, I have but to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book."

- Reply to Loyal Colored People of Baltimore upon Presentation of a Bible, September 7, 1864

"Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the almighty and them."

- Letter to Thurlow Weed, March 15, 1865

Grief and Mourning

In the untimely loss of your noble son, our affliction here, is scarcely less than your own. So much of promised usefulness to one's country, and of bright hopes for one's self and friends, have rarely been so suddenly dashed, as in his fall.

- Letter to Ephraim D. and Phoebe Ellsworth, May 25, 1861

"In this sad world of ours, sorrow comes to all; and, to the young, it comes with bitterest agony, because it takes them unawares."

- Letter to Fanny McCullough, December 23, 1862

"I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."

- Letter to Lydia Bixby, November 21, 1864

Labor and Work

"To secure to each laborer the whole product of his labor, or as nearly as possible, is a worthy object of any good government."

- Temperance Address at Springfield, February 22, 1842

"If you intend to go to work, there is no better place than right where you are; if you do not intend to go to work, you can not get along anywhere."

- Letter to John D. Johnson, November 4, 1851

"As labor is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden on the shoulders of others is the greatest durable curse of the race."

- Fragment on Slavery, circa July 1854

"The ant who has toiled and dragged a crumb to his nest will furiously defend the fruit of his labor against whatever robber assails him. So plain that the most dumb and stupid slave that ever toiled for a master does constantly know that he is wronged."

- Fragment on Slavery, circa July 1854

"Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope."

- Fragment on Free Labor, circa September 1859

"I hold if the Almighty had ever made a set of men that should do all the eating and none of the work, he would have made them with mouths only and no hands, and if he had ever made another class that he had intended should do all the work and none of the eating, eh would have made them without mouths and with all hands."

- Speech at Cincinnati, Ohio, September 17, 1859

"Every man is proud of what he does well; and no man is proud of what he does not do well. With the former, his heart is in his work; and he will do twice as much of it with less fatigue. The latter performs a little imperfectly, looks at it in disgust, turns from it, and imagines himself exceedingly tired. The little he has done, comes to nothing, for want of finishing."

- Speech before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee, September 30, 1859

"The old general rule was that educated people did not perform manual labor. They managed to eat their bread, leaving the toil of producing it to the uneducated. This was not an insupportable evil to the working bees, so long as the class of drones remained very small. But now, especially in these free States, nearly all are educated—quite too nearly all, to leave the labor of the uneducated, in any wise adequate to the support of the whole. It follows from this that henceforth educated people must labor. Otherwise, education itself would become a positive and intolerable evil. No country can sustain, in idleness, more than a small percentage of its numbers. The great majority must labor at something productive."

- Speech before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee, September 30, 1859

"The world is agreed that labor is the source from which human wants are mainly supplied. There is no dispute upon that point."

- Speech before the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Milwaukee, September 30, 1859

"Every man, black, white or yellow, has a mouth to be fed and two hands with which to feed it – and that bread should be allowed to go to that mouth without controversy."

- Speech at Hartford, Connecticut, March 5, 1860

"Work, work, work, is the main thing."

- Letter to John M. Brockman, September 25, 1860

"I am not ashamed to confess that twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer, mauling rails, at work on a flatboat – just what might happen to any poor man's son. I want every man to have a chance.

- Speech at New Haven, March 6, 1860

"I hold that while man exists it is his duty to improve not only his own condition, but to assist in ameliorating mankind; and therefore, I will simply say that I am for those means which will give the greatest good to the greatest numbers."

- Speech at Cincinnati, February 12, 1861

"Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration."

- First Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861

"Let him who is houseless pull down the house of another; but let him labor diligently and build one for himself, thus by example assuring that his own shall be safe from violence when built."

- Reply to New York Workingmen's Democratic Republican Association, March 21, 1864

Life

"Others have been made fools of by the girls; but this can never be with truth said of me. I most emphatically, in this instance, made a fool of myself."

- Letter to Eliza Browning, April 1, 1838

"In this troublesome world, we are never quite satisfied."

- Letter to Mary Todd Lincoln, April 16, 1848

"The true rule, in determining to embrace or reject anything, is not whether it have any evil in it, but whether it have more of evil than of good."

- Speech on Internal Improvements, June 20, 1848

"I wish to do justice to all."

- Speech to U.S. House of Representatives, July 27, 1848

"Leave nothing for tomorrow which can be done today."

- Notes for a law lecture, circa July 1, 1850

"The better part of one's life consists in his friendships."

- Letter to Joseph Gillespie, May 19, 1849

“Let bygones be bygones; let past differences as nothing be.”

- Speech at Chicago, December 10, 1856

“It really hurts me very much to suppose that I have wronged anybody on earth.”

- Debate at Quincy, October 13, 1858

“The inclination to exchange thoughts with one another is probably an original impulse of our nature.”

- Second Lecture on Discoveries and Inventions, February 11, 1859

“I have found that it is not entirely safe, when one is misrepresented under his very nose, to allow this misrepresentation to go uncontradicted.”

- Speech at Columbus, September 16, 1859

“I have found that when one is embarrassed, usually the shortest way to get through with it is to quit talking or thinking about it, and go at something else.”

- Speech at Cincinnati, September 17, 1859

“My friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.”

- Farewell Address at Springfield, February 11, 1861

“How miserably things seem to be arranged in this world. If we have no friends, we have no pleasure; and if we have them, we are sure to lose them, and be doubly pained by the loss.”

- Letter to Joshua F. Speed, February 25, 1862

“It is a cheering thought throughout life that something can be done to ameliorate the condition of those who have been subject to the hard usage of the world.”

- Address on Colonization to a deputation of Negroes, August 14, 1862

“Yield larger things to which you can show nor more than equal right; and yield lesser ones, though clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog, than be bitten by him in contesting for the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite.”

- Letter to James M. Cutts, Jr., October 26, 1863

"I have endured a great deal of ridicule without much malice; and have received a great deal of kindness, not quite free from ridicule. I am used to it."

- Letter to James H. Hackett, November 2, 1863

"Important principles may and must be inflexible."

- Last public speech, April 11, 1865

Patience and Perseverance

"Let none falter, who thinks he is right, and we may succeed."

- Speech at Springfield, December 26, 1839

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed, is more important than any other one thing."

- Letter to Isham Reavis, November 5, 1855

"A man watches his pear-tree day after day, impatient for the ripening of the fruit. Let him attempt to force the process and he may spoil both fruit and tree. But let him patiently wait, and the ripe pear at the length falls into his lap."

- Remarks at White House, circa February 1865

"We shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it."

- Last public speech, April 11, 1865

Public Opinion and Persuasion

"When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and a true maxim, that a "drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall."

- Temperance Address at Springfield , February 22, 1842

"Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion, can change the government, practically just so much."

- Speech at Chicago, December 10, 1856

"Whoever molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces judicial decisions. He makes possible the enforcement of them, else impossible."

- Note for speeches, circa October 1858

"Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed."

- Debate at Ottawa, August 21, 1858

"No policy that does not rest upon philosophical public opinion can be permanently maintained."

- Speech at New Haven, March 6, 1860

Reason and Argument

"Passion has helped us; but can do so no more. It will in future be our enemy. Reason, cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason, must furnish all the materials for our future support and defence."

- Lyceum Address at Springfield, January 27, 1838

"Happy day, when, all appetites controlled, all poisons subdued, all matter subjected, mind, all conquering mind, shall live and move the monarch of the world. Glorious consummation! Hail fall of Fury! Reign of Reason, all hail!

- Temperance Address, February 22, 1842

"If a man will stand up and assert, and repeat and re-assert, that two and two do not make four, I know nothing in the power of argument that can stop him."

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

"If a man says he knows a thing, then he must show how he knows it.

- Debate at Ottawa, August 21, 1858

"There are two ways of establishing a proposition. One is by trying to demonstrate it upon reason; and the other is to show that great men in former times have thought so and so, and thus to pass it by the weight of pure authority."

- Speech at Columbus, Ohio, September 16, 1859

Slavery and Freedom

"Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature — opposition to it is in his love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely, as slavery extension brings them, shocks, and throes, and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise — repeal all compromises — repeal the declaration of independence — repeal all past history, you still can not repeal human nature. It still will be the abundance of man's heart, that slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth will continue to speak.

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

"You know I dislike slavery; and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it."

- Letter to Joshua Speed, August 24, 1855

"The slave-breeders and slave-traders, are a small, odious and detested class, among you; and yet in politics, they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters, as you are the master of your own negroes."

- Letter to Joshua Speed, August 24, 1855

"On the question of liberty, as a principle, we are not what we have been. When we were the political slaves of King George, and wanted to be free, we called the maxim that "all men are created equal" a self-evident truth; but now when we have grown fat, and have lost all dread of being slaves ourselves, we have become so greedy to be masters that we call the same maxim "a self-evident lie."

- Letter to George Robertson, August 15, 1855

"The Autocrat of all the Russia's will resign his crown, and proclaim his subjects free republicans sooner than will our American masters voluntarily give up their slaves."

- Letter to George Robertson, August 15, 1855

"Welcome, or unwelcome, agreeable, or disagreeable, whether this shall be an entire slave nation, is the issue before us."

- Fragment of a Speech, circa May 18, 1858

"I believe this Government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided."

- House Divided Speech, June 16, 1858

"I believe each individual is naturally entitled to do as he pleases with himself and the fruits of his labor, so far as it in no wise interferes with any other man's rights."

- Speech at Chicago, Illinois, July 10, 1858

"I leave you, hoping that the lamp of liberty will burn in your bosoms until there shall no longer be a doubt that all men are created free and equal."

- Speech at Chicago, July 10, 1858

"If we cannot give freedom to every creature, let us do nothing that will impose slavery upon any other creature."

- Speech at Chicago, July 10, 1858

"Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in our bosoms. Our defense is in the preservation of the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere."

- Speech at Edwardsville, September 11, 1858

"I think we have fairly entered upon a durable struggle as to whether this nation is to ultimately become all slave or all free, and though I fall early in the contest, it is nothing if I shall have contributed, in the least degree, to the final rightful result."

- Letter to H.D. Sharpe, December 8, 1858

"If slavery is right, it ought to be extended; if not, it ought to be restricted – there is no middle ground."

- Speech at Hartford, March 5, 1860

"You think slavery is right and should be extended; while we think slavery is wrong and ought to be restricted. That I suppose is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us."

- Letter to Alexander H. Stephens, December 22, 1860

"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause."

- Letter to Horace Greeley, August 22, 1862

"What I did, I did after very full deliberation, and under a heavy and solemn sense of responsibility. I can only trust in God that I have made no mistake."

- Reply to Serenade in Honor of [Preliminary] Emancipation Proclamation, September 24, 1862

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free — honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best, hope of earth."

- Message to Congress, December 1, 1862

"Still, to use a coarse, but an expressive figure, broken eggs can not be mended. I have issued the emancipation proclamation, and I can not retract it."

- Letter to John A. McClernand, January 8, 1863

"I have very earnestly urged the slave-states to adopt emancipation; and it ought to be, and is an object with me not to overthrow, or thwart what any of them may in good faith do, to that end."

- Letter to John M. Schofield, June 23, 1863

"You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but, no matter. Fight you, then exclusively to save the Union."

- Letter to James Conkling, August 26, 1863

"And then, there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation..."

- Letter to James Conkling, August 26, 1863

"You dislike the emancipation proclamation; and, perhaps, would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional – I think differently."

- Letter to James Conkling, August 26, 1863

"I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel. And yet I have never understood that the Presidency conferred upon me an unrestricted right to act officially upon this judgment and feeling."

- Letter to Albert Hodges, April 4, 1864

"We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself, and the product of his labor; while with others, the same word may mean for some men to do as they please with other men, and the product of other men's labor. Here are two, not only different, but incompatible things, called by the same name – liberty. And it follows that each of the things is, by the respective parties, called by two different and incompatible names – liberty and tyranny."

- Address at Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, Maryland, April 18, 1864

"The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one. We all declare for liberty; but in using the same word we do not all mean the same thing."

- Address at Sanitary Fair, Baltimore, Maryland, April 18, 1864

I wish all men to be free."

- Letter to Henry W Hoffman, October 4, 1864

"One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war."

- Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

"I have always thought all men should be free; but if any should be slaves, it should be first those who desire it for themselves, and secondly, those who desire it others. Whenever I hear any one arguing for slavery I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."

- Speech to One Hundred Fortieth Indiana Regiment, March 17, 1865

United States and Union

"Let North and South – let all Americans – let all lovers of liberty everywhere join in the great and good work."

- Speech at Peoria, October 16, 1854

"We do not want to dissolve the Union; you shall not."

- Speech at Galena, August 1, 1856

"To the best of my judgment I have labored for, and not against the Union."

- Speech at Springfield, October 29, 1858

"Let us neither express nor cherish any hard feelings toward any citizen who by his vote has differed with us. Let us at all times remember that all American citizens are brothers of a common country, and should dwell together in the bonds of fraternal feeling."

- Remarks at Springfield, November 20, 1860

"[M]y opinion is that no state can, in any way lawfully, get out of the Union, without the consent of the others; and that it is the duty of the President, and other government functionaries to run the machine as it is."

- Letter to Thurlow Weed, December 17, 1860

"The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776."

- First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861

"The United States don't need the services of boys who disobey their parents."

- Letter to Gideon Welles, undated

"I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored; the nearer the Union will be 'the Union as it was.'"

- Letter to Horace Greeley, August 22, 1862

"May our children and our children's children to a thousand generations, continue to enjoy the benefits conferred upon us by a united country, and have cause yet to rejoice under those glorious institutions bequeathed us by Washington and his compeers."

- Speech at Frederick, Maryland, October 4, 1862

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country."

- Second Annual Message to Congress, December 1, 1862

"A fair examination of history has seemed to authorize a belief that the past action and influences of the United States were generally regarded as having been beneficent towards mankind."

- Letter to the Workingmen of Manchester, England, January 19, 1863

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

- Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863

"The restoration of the Rebel States to the Union must rest upon the principle of civil and political equality of both races; and it must be sealed by general amnesty.

- Letter to James S. Wadsworth, January 1864

"It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives."

- Speech to the One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment, August 22, 1864

"Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality. To the humblest and poorest amongst us are held out the highest privileges and positions. The present moment finds me at the White House, yet there is as good a chance for your children as there was for my father's."

- Speech to 148th Ohio Regiment, August 31, 1864

"Thoughtful men must feel that the fate of civilization upon this continent is involved in the issue of our contest."

- Letter to John Maclean, December 27, 1864

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."

- Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

War and Soldiers

"He who does something at the head of one Regiment, will eclipse him who does nothing at the head of a hundred."

- Letter to David Hunter, December 31, 1861

"With us every soldier is a man of character, and must be treated with more consideration than is customary in Europe."

- Letter to Count Gasparin, August 4, 1862

"I would like to speak in terms of praise to the many brave officers and soldiers who have fought in the cause of the war."

- Response to Serenade, July 7, 1863

